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Congratulations to the Class of 2020

In the years to come, the year 2020 will surely be a memorable one for all of us. Many of the plans we had made for this year, whether personal, professional, educational, or recreational, have been altered by conditions beyond our control.

One example of a group whose plans have been altered are the graduating high school seniors of the Class of 2020. We have heard and seen much surrounding their disappointment for not being able to participate in a “traditional” graduation ceremony. Murray’s two high schools, Murray and Cottonwood, have a total of 776 graduating seniors whose graduation plans have been altered. Both schools have found creative ways to acknowledge the graduating seniors while maintaining the social distancing guidelines, and I applaud them for that. Among other unique arrangements, Cottonwood High organized a “graduation walk” for the graduates from Woodstock Elementary to Cottonwood High, where each student’s name was announced. Murray High seniors were recorded in their graduation regalia for their graduation ceremony video, a feat that required a week to complete in order to comply with social distancing guidelines. Many local high schools, including Murray, participated in a “lights-on tribute” on Friday May 8 to encourage the Class of 2020 to “Be the Light” in turbulent times.

The conditions of 2020 are themselves a life lesson for the graduating class. Things will not always turn out the way they were planned. It is necessary to be flexible and able to adapt to the circumstances that life throws your way and, to use a baseball metaphor, there will be curveballs thrown along the way! It is almost guaranteed that the graduating Class of 2020 will face challenges that will make the loss of the traditional graduation seem like a very small inconvenience.



High school graduation means an end and a beginning at the same time. Graduating seniors will go their various directions, some to college, some to trade schools, others directly to the work force, and various other plans. Some will stay in touch with close friends and others may not. Regardless of their chosen path, I wish nothing but the best for these new graduates.

To the young women and young men of the Class of 2020, I say congratulations on your milestone achievement! The time you have all invested in learning over the past 13 years of your life, along with the social and personal experiences along the way, have made you what you are today. As you move forward in life, don't dwell on the negative circumstances surrounding your last days as a high school senior and what you may have missed out on, but rather celebrate what and who you have become, and what you have learned from your unique senior experience. You are our future medical professionals, teachers, public safety officers, civic leaders, engineers, financial experts, business leaders, parents, and so forth.

In the meantime, let us continue to make plans, knowing full well that some will work out exactly as planned while others will completely change due to circumstances beyond our control. How we respond to those unexpected changes in plans shows our true character. The novelist Susan Gregg Gilmore wrote, "It's a funny thing, how much time we spend planning our lives. We so convince ourselves of what we want to do, that sometimes we don't see what we're meant to do."

The advice to the graduating seniors is a valuable reminder to all of us to "be the light in turbulent times."

Congratulations to all graduating seniors of the Class of 2020!

I also want to congratulate the following recipients of the Murray Mayor's Scholarship: Elizabeth Ivins and Jackson Neuberger from Cottonwood High School, and Allyson Vuyk and James Delliskave from Murray High School. I'm proud of each of you and wish you the very best in the future.